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ABSTRACT

This series of 10 brief information sheets on study skills discusses topics of interest to secondary and college students. The topics are: (1) Better Study Skills for Better Grades; (2) Listening in the Classroom; (3) Taking Notes during Classroom Lectures; (4) Getting the Most from Your Textbooks; (5) The Cornell Note-Taking System; (6) How To Do Well on an Essay Test; (7) How To Do Well on Objective Tests; (8) How to Manage Your Time; (9) How To Write Well; and (10) Using the Library. (SR)

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ICPAC Information Series

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BETTER STUDY SKILLS FOR BETTER GRADES

How do you get better grades in high school?

People will often tell you that you need to *study hard* to get good grades. This advice is not really very useful. **What does it mean to study hard?** How do you study so that your hard work pays off in good grades? It is very important to learn and use good study skills. If you use good study skills, you can get a better pay-off for your hard work.

Better study skills can lead to better grades.

How do you improve your study skills? You use different skills for different kinds of studying. Here are some simple steps that may improve your skills for listening, taking notes, preparing for tests, and managing your time. These skills can help you succeed in your work, in high school, and in any learning situation.

Why are good listening skills important? Have you ever listened to someone—a teacher, a friend, a television commentator—and realized later that you didn't remember anything the person said? You heard them speaking, but didn't hear what they were saying. That's because hearing and listening are two different things. **Hearing** is something your ears do. **Listening** involves your ears and your mind. When you listen to what people say, you understand and remember more.

Being a good listener in the classroom has many benefits. Good listeners find learning easier because they think about what is being said. So, good listeners are likely to get good grades.

People are not born with good listening skills—they must be developed. People who are good listeners have learned how to listen. You can learn how to listen, too. To be a better listener, try these things.

- Be ready to learn when you go to class.
- Try to understand the speaker's main purpose.
- Listen for the sequence of ideas.
- Be an active listener. Ask mental questions and draw conclusions as you listen.
- Try to identify the main points. Don't get lost in small details.

Why is it important to take notes? You forget almost half of what you hear or read within an hour. One way to capture information so that you won't forget it is to take notes. You should take notes as you listen. You should also take notes as you read. Once you have your notes, new information can be reviewed later, not forgotten.

How do I take notes during a classroom lecture?

Taking notes from a lecture is really a three-step process. Prepare *before* the lecture. Listen carefully *during* the lecture. Use your notes to study *after* the lecture.

• Before the lecture

Read the textbook assignment. Review the notes from the last lecture to refresh your memory. Keep the notes from each class in a separate loose-leaf notebook.

• During the lecture

Listen to what the teacher is saying. Think about it. Ask questions to make sure you understand what is being said. Then, write notes to help you remember the important points. Write quickly but clearly. Watch for clues that tell you how the lecture is organized.

• After the lecture

Review your notes as soon after the lecture as you can. Replay the lecture in your head. Before you forget what you heard, make sure your notes make sense to you. Add information that you did not write down in class. Make sure you understand all the points the teacher made.

Try to get as much information as possible from your textbooks. How do you do this?

• **Before you read each chapter, preview it.** Scan the chapters, study the illustrations, and read the first and final paragraphs of each chapter. Get the main ideas before you read each chapter through.

• **While you read, break the chapters down into sections.** Turn the headings into questions. Try to answer them as you read. Summarize each section after you read it. Make notes in your own words to make sure you understand the ideas.

• **After you read, review and think about the material.** Try to relate it to what you have heard in class. Does the textbook provide review questions? Use them. Do you have questions? Write them down and ask your teacher. There are no stupid questions; the points that you do not understand may be unclear to other students also. Review material often. Short, quick reviews are much more helpful than cramming for exams.



How do I do better on tests? You will do a much better job on exams if you have a strategy for taking tests. What is a test-taking strategy? A test-taking strategy is a plan that will help you do as well as you can on a test. It means that you think about the kind of test you are going to take and prepare yourself for the kinds of questions you will get. It is important to prepare for the kind of test you will take. Different kinds of tests need different kinds of preparation.

There are two kinds of tests, **objective tests** and **essay tests**. For either kind of test, begin studying by thinking about the kinds of questions you may be asked. You can prepare best for exams if you have listened in class, read your textbooks carefully, and made good, readable notes.

- **Objective tests** ask students to recognize information. They include multiple choice, matching, fill in the blank, short answer, and true-false questions. In an objective test, the teacher wants to find out if you know the details.
- **Essay tests** ask students to recall and organize information. Students need to organize, support ideas with details and examples, evaluate evidence, and draw conclusions. In an essay test the teacher wants to find out if you know the details and can reason and organize information.

How can I find time to get all my studying done and still have fun with my friends? Managing your time well can help you meet all your goals. Planning lets you know exactly what you need to do. Make the most of your time by planning ahead.

- **Plan by the semester or grading period.** Write down all the major due dates on your calendar. Ask teachers when tests and major projects will be due, so you can use your time wisely. You should spend the most time for the most important projects. Estimate how long each project will take. Set up a schedule that will give you enough time to finish big and small assignments. You don't know about all your assignments ahead of time? Change your schedule when you learn about new assignments, or when due dates change.

- **Plan by the week.** Make a plan for the week so that you can get all of your activities finished on time—papers, tests, reading assignments, work, meetings. Schedule small blocks of time each day for studying. Plan to accomplish at least one task in each study block.

- **Plan each day.** Make a "to do" list for each day. Then you won't spend your time trying to remember what you are supposed to do. If you don't have any assignments due the next day, don't just waste the day. You might study ahead, work on a big project that is due later, or review material that is still 'fuzzy' to you.

If I am very good in one subject, why do I have so much trouble in another? Different subjects make use of different mental skills and study strategies. Math uses your reasoning skills, a foreign language uses your memorization skills, an English class makes use of your language skills. Because different subjects use different skills, you need to use a different strategy to study each one.

You can learn how to get the most from your time in school. Take the time now to learn the habit of using good study skills. New habits can be hard to learn, but this habit can pay you back in ways that will make you very glad that you took the trouble!

Do you want to know more about how to improve your study skills?

Call the ICPAC Hotline, toll-free, at **1-800-992-2076**. We would be glad to send you free copies of any of the following guides.

Listening in the Classroom	(SS - 1)
Taking Notes during Classroom Lectures	(SS - 2)
Getting the Most from Your Textbooks	(SS - 3)
The Cornell Note-Taking System	(SS - 4)
How to Do Well on an Essay Test	(SS - 5)
How to Do Well on Objective Tests	(SS - 6)
How to Manage Your Time	(SS - 7)



LISTENING IN THE CLASSROOM

Why are good listening skills important?

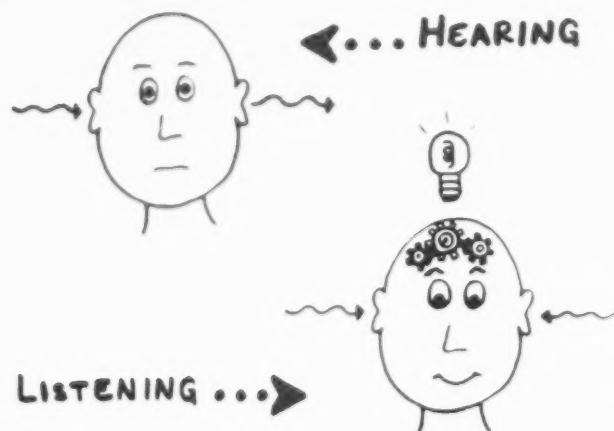
Have you ever listened to someone—a teacher, a friend, a reporter—and realized later that you didn't remember anything the person said? You heard them speaking, but didn't hear what they were saying.

Hearing and listening are two different things.

Hearing is something your ears do. **Listening** involves your ears and your mind. Good listening skills help you understand and remember what is said.

You gain a lot if you listen well in the classroom. Good listeners tend to get better grades. Good grades make learning more fun. Good listeners think about what is being said. They understand, learn, and remember information longer.

People are not born with good listening skills—they are learned. Good listeners have learned how to listen. You can learn how, too.



Do you want to know more about how to improve your study skills?

Call the ICPAC Hotline, toll-free, at 1-800-992-2076. We would be glad to send you free copies of any of the following guides.

Better Study Skills for Better Grades	(90 - 7)
Taking Notes during Classroom Lectures	(SS - 2)
Getting the Most from Your Textbooks	(SS - 3)
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How to Do Well on an Essay Test	(SS - 5)
How to Do Well on Objective Tests	(SS - 6)
How to Manage Your Time	(SS - 7)

How can I improve my listening skills?

Here are some ways to improve your listening habits.

1. Go to class ready to learn. Don't get distracted — sit in the front of the room. Pay attention to the speaker. Now is not the right time to think about yesterday's exam or tomorrow's after-school activities. Does the teacher pass out an outline for the lecture? Follow it. Think about why you are listening. Be alert.

2. Listen for the main ideas.

• **What is the speaker's purpose?** What is the speaker's message? What are the main points of the lecture?

• **How has the speaker organized the lecture?** Is the speaker guiding you through a period of time? Giving you points from the most important to least important? From least important to most important? From cause to effect?

• **How are the ideas organized?** How does one idea lead to another? Listen for words and phrases that tell you how the speaker has organized the talk. Some of the phrases you should listen for are: "The four most important writers...." "On the other hand...." "Now let's turn our attention to...." "Finally...." or "In summary...." These key phrases help you follow the pattern of the lecture and the sequence of ideas.

3. Be an active listener.

• **Ask yourself questions** during the lecture.

• **Summarize the main points of the lecture** during pauses. This helps you stay alert and follow the pattern of the lecture.

• **Draw conclusions** for yourself.

• **Separate fact from opinion**, old material from new material, main ideas from minor points. What are the main ideas? What are the facts and examples that illustrate these main ideas? Make sure you can tell the difference.

• **Relate ideas to real life.** Relate new ideas to what you already know. This helps the new ideas make sense to you. It also makes them easier to remember.

4. Approach the lecture with an open mind.

Focus on what the speaker is saying. On the other side ten bad listening habits are listed. Do you have any of these bad habits? Now is the time to become a good listener and make learning easier.

Ten Bad Listening Habits and How to Break Them

Bad Listening Habits

Poor Listeners...

Good Listeners...

Calling a subject dull

decide a lecture is going to be dull and "turn off" the speaker.

listen closely for information that can be important or useful, even when a lecture seems dull.

Criticizing a speaker

find fault with the speaker—their voice, clothes, or looks. They decide that the speaker won't say anything important.

realize that a lecture is not a fashion show or a popularity contest. Good listeners look for the ideas being presented, not for things to criticize.

Overreacting to a speaker

become so involved in disagreeing with the speaker that they miss most of the lecture.

listen with the mind, not the emotions. Good listeners jot down something they disagree with to ask the speaker later, then go on listening.

Listening for facts only

want only "the facts" and consider all else to be the speaker's opinion.

want to see how the facts and examples support the speaker's ideas and arguments. Good listeners know that facts are important, but only in relation to ideas.

Outlining everything

try to force every lecture into a rigid mold by outlining the lecture in detail. A poor listener is so busy with form and style that the content is missed.

adjust their note-taking style to the speaker's topic and pattern of organization.

Faking attention

look at the speaker, but don't listen. They expect to get the material from the textbook later.

understand that speakers talk about what they think is most important. Good listeners know that information in a lecture may not be in a textbook.

Allowing distractions

use little distractions—someone coughing, a pencil dropping, the door opening and closing—as an excuse to stop listening.

filter out distractions and concentrate on the speaker's message.

Choosing only the easy stuff

think it is too much trouble and hard work to follow the speaker's complex ideas and arguments. A poor listener wants entertainment, not learning.

want to learn something new and try to understand the speaker's point. A good listener is not afraid of tough, technical, or complex ideas.

Overreacting to emotional words

get upset at words which trigger certain emotions—words such as *communist*, *income tax*, *Nazi*, or *evolution*. Blood pressure rises and listening ends.

hear the same emotion-laden words but listen even more closely. A good listener tries to understand the speaker's point of view.

Wasting thought speed

move along lazily with the speaker even though thinking is faster than speaking. A poor listener daydreams and falls behind.

use any extra time or pauses in the lecture to think about what the speaker is saying, summarize the main points, and think about the rest of the lecture.

TAKING NOTES DURING CLASSROOM LECTURES

Why is it important to take notes?

You forget almost half of what you hear or read within an hour. One way to capture information so that you won't forget it is to take notes. Then, new information can be reviewed and remembered, not forgotten.

How do I take notes during a classroom lecture?

Take notes from a lecture in three steps. 1) Prepare *before* the lecture. 2) Listen carefully and take notes *during* the lecture. 3) Use your notes to study *after* the lecture.

Before the lecture begins

- Read the textbook reading assignment.
- Arrive before the lecture and get a seat where you can see and hear the teacher.
- Use a loose-leaf notebook. This way you can keep your notes, handouts, maps, photocopies, and past tests in order and together.
- Keep notes from different classes in separate loose-leaf notebooks.
- Review the notes from the last lecture to refresh your memory.
- Don't sit where your friends will distract you during class.

During the lecture

- Listen—Think—Write
- Take notes in a way that you find comfortable. One way to take and review notes is described on the next page.
- Include major ideas, details and examples.
- Skip lines to show where one idea ends and a new one begins.
- Number and date each page of your notes.
- Write quickly but clearly. Cross out mistakes.
- Use abbreviations, but only ones that you will remember easily.
- Pay attention. Watch for clues that tell you how the lecture is organized and where it is going.

After the lecture

- Right after the lecture, review it in your head. If you don't understand something, write down your question. Ask the teacher to explain it before the next class.
- Read your notes as soon as possible after the lecture. The longer you wait, the less the notes may mean to you later.

How can I take better notes?

Here are some tips which you can turn into habits.

- **Write your notes in short sentences.** For example, write "Jean home 3PM," instead of "Jean will be home at 3:00 PM." Leave out unnecessary words.
- **Write clearly.** It is hard to read bad handwriting, even if it is your own. Your notes aren't useful if you can't read them.

• **Watch for signal words and key phrases.** These are clues that tell you to pay special attention to certain ideas. They help you understand how a lecture is organized. Here are some signal words and key phrases.

- *the five main causes...* This tells you to get ready for a list of five things.
- *before, after, prior, meanwhile.* These describe a time relationship. They help you understand what came first, second, and last.
- *on the other hand.* This signals a different point of view or a different way to look at the information.
- *for example, for instance.* These signal an example that will illustrate the point and make it clearer.
- *more importantly, above all, the most significant thing.* These tell you that the idea is very important. Write it down.
- *in other words, in essence, briefly.* These tell you that a complex idea is about to be stated more simply.
- *in a nutshell, in conclusion.* These signal a summary of the lecture or of the points covered.

There are several other ways that the teacher will give you clues to important points. Be alert for

- points that are repeated.
- long comments on a point.
- superlatives (words such as *most, least, best, worst, smallest, largest*).
- changes in the speaker's volume.
- changes in the rate at which the speaker talks.
- a list of points such as, "The three most important dates to remember are..."
- spelling words and giving directions.
- writing information on the chalkboard.

DOs and DON'Ts

DO

- Before the lecture, look over your notes from the last class to refresh your memory.
- Sit in the front to see and hear better. Stay alert.
- Make your notes as complete as possible so that you will understand them later. Write clearly, not in scribbles.
- Try to understand the ideas (the "big picture") as well as the facts and details.
- Try to figure out how the lecture is organized.
- Use a large, loose-leaf binder. Keep separate loose-leaf binders for each class.
- Begin taking notes immediately. This helps you pay attention.

DON'T

- Don't sit near your friends. You may be distracted.
- Don't use too many abbreviations. You might have trouble understanding them later.
- Don't take notes in shorthand. You will still have to translate your shorthand into regular words. That wastes time.
- Don't copy your notes by typing them. Write clearly the first time.

What is the best way to take notes?

There is no best way to take notes, but some ways are better than others. One good way is the Cornell Note-Taking System.

To start, prepare your note paper.

Use an 8 1/2 by 11 inch piece of loose-leaf notebook paper. Draw a line down the sheet 2 1/2 inches from the left-hand edge. End this line 2 inches from the bottom of the paper. If your paper already has a line down the left-hand margin, ignore it. Next, draw a line that is 2 inches up from the bottom of the page. Draw this line completely across the page. This is how your note paper will look.

(PART B)	(PART A)	Physics Sept. 29 Page 1
	Metric System	
○	A. Beginning of Metric System	
where was the metric system started?	1. Started in France in late 18 th century.	
	2. Group of scientists decided on a length and called it "meter".	
○	B. 7 Base Units of Measurement	
what are the 7 base units of measurement?	1. meter	
	2. kilogram	
	3. second	
	4. ampere	
	5. kelvin	
	6. mole	
○	7. candela	
(PART C)		
Scientists in France "discovered" the meter. Since the meter, they have added six more units of measurement.		

Then, take and review your notes.

Step 1: Write Notes

In **Part A**, write your classroom or textbook notes. Use the good note-taking tips described on the front page.

Step 2: Replay and Reduce

The first chance you get, replay the lecture in your head. Do it while you walk to your next class, in your next study hall, or at home. Ask yourself questions. *What was the teacher trying to get at? What was the main point? How does this information fit with what I already know? What did I learn?* Later, reread your notes and think about the lecture.

The **signal words** and **key phrases** that helped guide you during the lecture also will help you remember your notes. When you review your notes, **reduce** each idea in them to signal words or key phrases. Write these words or phrases in **Part B** of your note paper. They will trigger your memory. When you study, they will help you remember the whole idea.

Some people find it easier to remember their notes when they write **key questions** instead of key words in **Part B**. Which is better? Try each. Which works best for you?

Step 3: Recite

Say each fact or idea out loud. This is called **reciting**. It helps you remember better. Cover **Part A** of your note paper with a blank sheet of paper. You should only see the key words or questions in **Part B**. Read each key word or question out loud. What fact or idea does the key word relate to? **Recite it out loud and in your own words.** Then, check to make sure your answer is complete and correct. If you don't know the right answer, study your notes and recite out loud again. Recite until you get all the answers correct. Go through the whole lecture this way.

Do you feel funny reciting out loud? It really is worth doing. Research shows that students who recite out loud remember material much better than those who just reread the same material to themselves. It is also important to use your own words for the answer. Your own words make the material mean more to you than if you memorize an idea in someone else's words.

Step 4: Think and Reflect

Think about the information you have in your notes. This thinking process is called **reflecting**. **Reflect** by asking yourself questions about your notes. *What are the most important ideas? Why is this information important? How does this relate to what I already know?*

Step 5: Review

The word **review** means to view or look at something again. The best way to prepare for tests is to review your notes often. Make this a habit. **Recite and reflect** on your notes every day. Short, fast reviews daily can help you understand and remember much more than 'cramming' before a test.

Step 6: Summarize

If you can summarize your notes in your own words, you really understand the facts and ideas in them.

Write your summary in **Part C**, at the bottom of your note paper. You can

- Summarize each page of notes on that page;
- Summarize the entire lecture on the last page of notes for that lecture; or
- Do both.

Review your summaries when you study for tests.

It is worth learning to take good class notes. Good notes can help you save and remember what you heard.

Want more tips on study habits that can help you get better grades?

Call the toll-free ICPAC Hotline, 1-800-692-2076. We will send you free copies of any of the following guides. Guides marked with a * are also about taking notes.

Better Study Skills for Better Grades	(90 - 7)
Listening in the Classroom	(SS - 1)
* Getting the Most from Your Textbooks	(SS - 3)
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How to Do Well on Objective Tests	(SS - 6)
How to Manage Your Time	(SS - 7)
How to Write Well	(SS - 8)

GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR TEXTBOOKS

Why are textbooks important?

You go to class. You take good notes. Why do you need a textbook? Textbooks and classroom lectures talk about the same thing, don't they? No. Lectures are often the teacher's view of the material being covered. Textbooks sometimes give more in-depth information and examples. They may also give different views than those the teacher presents. A textbook is *not* a substitute for lectures. Use *both* of them to learn the most about a subject.

How can I get the most out of my textbooks?

Follow these simple steps *before you read*, *while you read*, and *after you read* to get the most from your textbooks.

Before you read

- Figure out how much time you will take to read the section. Plan to spend that much time to finish the reading.
- Find a quiet place to read, without distractions.
- Focus on what you are going to read. Think about what you already know about the topic.
- Look at the chapter briefly before you start reading. This is called **previewing**. This simple step only takes a few minutes but is well worth your time.

How do I preview?

- **Read the title of the chapter or section.** From the title, think about what might be in the chapter. Think about what you already know about the subject.
- **Scan the chapter, reading the headings and subheadings.** These are sign posts. They guide you. They tell what topics will be covered and how they are organized.
- **Study the illustrations.** Don't skip pictures, tables, charts, maps, and graphs. Study them.
- **Read the first paragraph of each section.** This is called the **introductory paragraph**. The author introduces the topic in the first paragraph. This paragraph may tell you about the points covered in the section. It may tell why the topic is important or how it will be presented.
- **Read the final paragraph of each section.** Skip to the end and read the closing paragraph. Here the author may summarize the argument, restate the main points, or add some final thoughts on the topic.

→ Now skim through the chapter quickly.

Look at the headings. How is the chapter organized? It may be divided into main points, time periods, or steps that have to be followed. Understanding how the material is organized, will help you as you read.

Previewing will only take you a few minutes. These few minutes will help you understand the topic much better when you start to read. Don't skip the preview step. You will get much more from your reading if you preview it.

While you read

- Break the chapter into sections. Use the subheadings to guide you as you do this.
- Turn each heading and subheading into a question. Answer the question as you read. For example, if a heading reads 'The Industrial Revolution,' ask yourself: *What was the Industrial Revolution? When did the Industrial Revolution take place? Why is the Industrial Revolution important?*
- When you get to the end of each section, make a mental summary of it. Mentally change the wording of the summary until it is very clear. Then write the summary in your notes.
- As you make notes, use your own words. Think of examples from your own life. Tips for taking notes from your textbook can be found on the next page.
- Have a mental conversation with the author. Ask the author questions as you go along. As you finish each section, answer those questions. If you can't answer them, write them down to ask a classmate or the teacher later.

After you read

- Review the subsections, sections, and chapter. Think about what you've read.
- Relate what you've read to the class lectures or other sources of information.
- Are there questions given in your textbook? Answer them. If not, make up some questions.
- Is there something in the reading that you don't understand? Write it down and ask about it in class. Do you have a comment about the reading? Write it down and bring it up during the next class.
- Review the material often. Short, quick reviews will help you remember and understand the

information better. This will also help you prepare for exams. Do you want to remember more? Review often and regularly. If you study for tests by 'cramming' at the last minute, you will probably be too confused and tired to do well.

How do I take notes from my textbook?

The Cornell Note-Taking System is a useful way to take notes. Do you want information on how to take notes this way? Call the ICPAC Hotline, toll-free, at 1-800-992-2076. Ask for a copy of *The Cornell Note-Taking System* (SS - 4).

Finish reading a section or chapter before you take any notes.

Be very **selective**. Only take notes on important information. Pay attention to

- lists of things.
- ideas the author says are "very important" or "most significant."
- points which summarize the chapter title, headings, or subheadings.

Make your notes **short**, but include enough information to make the idea clear.

Use **your own words**. You'll remember your own words much better than someone else's.

How do you organize your notes? You don't need a formal outline. You **do** need to recognize two patterns in your reading.

1. **Learn to recognize the parts in a paragraph.** Organize your notes according to this pattern.
 - The **topic sentence** states the main point of the paragraph. It is usually the first sentence in the paragraph.
 - **Supporting sentences** give facts, details, and examples. They explain the main ideas.
 - The **concluding sentence** sums up the paragraph. It may give conclusions based on information in the paragraph. Sometimes the concluding sentence restates the topic sentence.

Sometimes a section can have topic paragraphs, supporting paragraphs and concluding paragraphs.

2. **Learn to recognize how the author organized the material.** The author may use different types of organization. Some types are listed here.
 - **Time**—Events are given in the order in which they happened. Look for dates and phrases such as "in the early years," "five years later," and "during the next two years."
 - **Process**—Steps or events are given in the order in which the process takes place. Look for words such as "first," "next," "then," and "finally."
 - **Place or Space**—Things are discussed in terms of their location or their place in relation to other things. For example, from *left to right*, *high to low*, *large to small*.
 - **Importance**—Items can be listed from *most important to least important*, or from *least important to most important*.
 - **Cause and Effect**—The author may describe events or problems first, then explain how or why they happened. Or, the author may describe a

situation, then explain what happened because of this situation. **Why** something happened is the **cause**, and **what** happened is the **effect**.

- **Compare and Contrast**—Items may be discussed by looking at how they are similar or different. **Compare** means to look at similarities. **Contrast** means to look at differences. Sometimes teachers will ask you to 'compare' two things. They may want you to discuss similarities. Or, they may want you to discuss both similarities and differences. **Make sure you know what the teacher really wants you to do.**

As you read, make up your own categories to help you organize the facts and ideas in the text. It is easier to memorize information that you feel makes sense and is in order. Organize the material whatever way works best for you. There are lots of ways to organize things. You may decide to organize information by the **main points** and the supporting details, the **relationships** between the main ideas, the **central characters**, by the **important dates**, or by some other way that seems right for that information.



Do you want to know more about how to improve your study skills?

Call the ICPAC Hotline, toll-free, at 1-800-992-2076. We have study guides for a number of different study skills. We would be glad to send you free copies of any of these.

Better Study Skills for Better Grades	(90 - 7)
Listening in the Classroom	(SS - 1)
Taking Notes during Classroom Lectures	(SS - 2)
The Cornell Note-Taking System	(SS - 4)
How to Do Well on an Essay Test	(SS - 5)
How to Do Well on Objective Tests	(SS - 6)
How to Manage Your Time	(SS - 7)

THE CORNELL NOTE-TAKING SYSTEM

Why should you take notes?

You forget almost half of what you hear or read within an hour. One way to capture information so that you won't forget it is to take notes. Then, new information can be reviewed later and remembered, not forgotten.

How can I take better notes?

There is no best way to take notes, but some styles work better than others. One good method is called the Cornell Note-taking System.

How do I use the Cornell Note-taking System?

To start, prepare your note paper.

Use an 8 1/2 by 11 inch piece of loose-leaf notebook paper. Draw a line down the sheet 2 1/2 inches from the left-hand edge of the paper. End this line 2 inches from the bottom of the paper. If your paper already has a line down the left-hand margin, ignore it. Next, draw a line that is 2 inches up from the bottom of the page. Draw this line completely across the page. Turn over this page to see how your note paper should look.

Then, take and use your notes.

• Step 1: Write Notes

In *Part A*, write your classroom or textbook notes.

→ **Write your notes in short sentences.** For example, write "Jean home 3pm," instead of "Jean will be home at 3:00 PM." Leave out unnecessary words.

→ **Write clearly.** It can be hard to read bad handwriting, even if it is your own! Write your notes clearly. They aren't useful if you can't read them.

• Step 2: Replay and Reduce

The first chance you get replay the lecture or the reading in your head. This might be while you walk to your next class, in your next study hall, or at home. Later, reread your notes and think about the lecture.

Sometimes a word or short phrase can be a clue to help you remember a whole idea. These clues are called **key words** or **key phrases**. When you review your notes **reduce** each idea in them to key words or key phrases. Write these key words in *Part B* of your note paper. These clues will trigger your memory. When you study, the key words will help you remember the whole idea.

Some people find it easier to remember their notes when they write **key questions** instead of key words in *Part B*. Which is better? Try each. Which works best for you?

• Step 3: Recite

Say each fact or idea **out loud**. This is called **reciting**. It helps you remember better. Cover *Part A* of your note paper with a blank sheet of paper. You should only see the key words or questions in *Part B*. Read each key word or question out loud. **Recite out loud and in your own**

words the fact or idea the key word relates to. Then, check to make sure that your answer is complete and correct. If you do not know the right answer, study your notes and recite your answer out loud again. Recite until you get all the answers correct. Go through the whole lecture or chapter this way.

Do you feel funny reciting out loud? It is worth doing. Research shows that students who recite out loud remember material much better than those who just reread the same material to themselves. It is also important to use your own words for the answer. Your own words make the material mean more to you than if you memorize an idea in someone else's words.

• Step 4: Think and Reflect

Think about the information you have in your notes. This thinking process is called **reflecting**. **Reflect** by asking yourself questions about your notes. Ask yourself, "What are the most important ideas?", "Why is this information important?", and "How does this relate to what I already know?"

• Step 5: Review

The word **review** means to view or look at something again. The best way to prepare for tests is to review or look at your notes regularly. Make this a habit. **Recite and reflect** on your notes every day. Short, fast reviews daily will help you understand and remember more than "cramming" before a test.

• Step 6: Summarize

If you can summarize your notes in your own words, you really understand the facts and ideas in them. Review your summaries when you study for tests.

Write your summary in *Part C*, at the bottom of your note paper. You can

- Summarize each page of notes on that page;
- Summarize the entire lecture on the last page of notes for that lecture; or
- Do both.

Would you like to see an example of how to use the Cornell Note-taking System? Turn this page over.

Want more tips on study habits that can help you get better grades?

Call the toll-free ICPAC Hotline, 1-800-992-2076. We will send you free copies of any of the following guides. Guides marked with a * are also about taking notes.

Better Study Skills for Better Grades	(90 - 7)
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How to Do Well on Objective Tests	(SS - 6)
How to Manage Your Time	(SS - 7)

Revised 12 June 1990

The Cornell Note-Taking System was adapted from *How to Study in College*, a book by Walter Pauk.

Part B — Reduce.

In Part B, write key words or questions from your notes

Here is an example of key words or questions.

Class Name Physics
Date Oct. 12
Page Number 1

Part A — Write Notes.

In Part A, write your notes during the lecture or while you read.
Here is an example of classroom or reading notes.

Metric System

A. Beginning of Metric System

Where was the Metric system started?

1. Started in France in late 18th Century.

2. Group of scientists decided on a length and called it "meter".

Where did the word "meter" come from?

3. Meter comes from the Greek word Metron - meaning "a measure".

B. Adopting the Metric System

When was the metric system first adopted?

1. Adopted in France in 1793.

2. Many people were against it.

3. Napoleon changed back to the old system of measurement in 1812.

Who changed France back to the old system of measurement?

4. The metric system was adopted again in 1840 and has been used ever since.

C. Units of Measurement

1. The metric system has 7 base units of measurement.

a. The 7 base units are

What are the 7 base units of measurement?

1. meter

2. kilogram

3. second

4. ampere

5. kelvin

6. mole

7. candela

Part C — Summarize. In Part C, summarize the notes that you wrote in Part A.

Here is an example of a summary.

13

Scientists in France "discovered" the meter. After many years, the metric system was adopted in France in 1840. Since the meter, they have added 6 more units of measurement: kilogram, second, ampere, kelvin, mole, and candela.

HOW TO DO WELL ON AN ESSAY TEST

Why is a test-taking plan important? If you plan and prepare well for a test, you are likely to do better on it than if you don't prepare. This isn't just because you know the material. You will also feel confident. This lets you put your time and energy into answering the questions. You won't spend time worrying while you take the test.

What kind of test are you going to take? Different kinds of tests have different kinds of questions. Prepare yourself for the kinds of questions you will get. If you are well prepared, you are likely to succeed.

What is an essay test?

- Essay questions ask you to write answers.
- Essay questions ask students to organize information, evaluate evidence, and draw conclusions.
- Essay questions ask for details and examples.
- Essay tests ask if you know the details and can reason and organize information.

How do I study for an essay test?

Take good notes. You can prepare best if you listen well in class, read your textbooks carefully, and make good, readable notes. One good way to take notes and review is the Cornell Note-taking System. See the box on the bottom of this page to find out about this system.

Think of possible questions. Were you given a study guide for the class? If so, review your study guide. **Review your class notes.** Look for common themes and main ideas. How did the teacher organize the material in the lectures? From most important to least important? By events through time? What points were stressed? **Review your textbook notes.** What are the main ideas? Are there questions at the end of the section or the chapter? Were any questions given to you directly? These are all possible test questions.

Once you have thought of possible test questions, review your notes. Write each question at the top of a sheet of notebook paper. Go through your notes. As you find information that will help you answer a question, write it on that sheet of paper.

Organize the information you wrote down for each question. What are the main ideas? What details and examples support each of the ideas?

You can organize your information many ways. Try organizing it by

- when things happened in time
- where things happened
- what was most important compared to least important
- what caused something to happen
- making an outline
- drawing a diagram, map or chart.

Write complete answers to the questions you prepared. Time yourself. Allow yourself the same length of time as you will have for the test. Practice this until you can do it without looking at your notes.

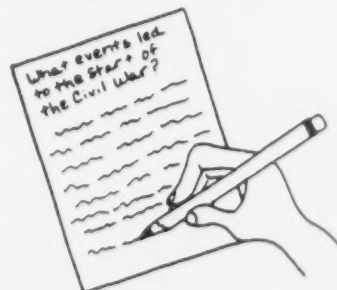
How do I get started on an essay test?

Whenever you begin a test, follow these simple rules.

1. **Read the directions carefully and completely.**
2. **Budget your time.** Give the most time to the questions that are worth the most points. Answer the "easy" questions first.
3. **If you are not sure of the answer to a question, skip it.** Go back to it later.

Steps for answering an essay question.

1. **Read the question carefully.** Make sure you answer the question you are asked.
2. **Organize your thoughts** before you start to write.
3. **Briefly outline your answer** before you begin. You can write an outline on the top or bottom of the page, or in the margins. This will help you stay on track.
4. **Write clearly and carefully.** Focus on the main points. Have a reason for every sentence you write. Remember, when you take an essay test, it is not just what you know, but how you say it.
5. **Write an organized essay.** Organize your essay this way. In the first paragraph, tell what points you will talk about in the essay. In the body of the essay, talk about these points. In the conclusion, sum up the essay.
6. **Support the main ideas** of the essay with details, facts, and examples.
7. **Reread your essay.** If you want to add something, add it neatly in the margin. If you take out something, cross it out neatly.



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How do I know what the teacher wants?

Many essay questions have key words that tell what kind of answer the teacher wants. These words are very important. Common key words are:

COMPARE	Discuss similarities. Your teacher may also want you to discuss differences.
CONTRAST	Discuss differences.
DEFINE	Give a clear, short explanation. Show how this idea differs from similar ideas.
DEMONSTRATE	Prove a point. Give evidence, examples or facts to back up the conclusion.
DESCRIBE	Give a clear, detailed statement.
DISCUSS	Analyze and explain in detail.
DIAGRAM/ ILLUSTRATE	Draw a picture, map, chart, or table to show the idea. ILLUSTRATE can also mean to explain something and give examples.
EXPLAIN WHY	Give causes. Use examples.
EXPLAIN WHAT	Give a definition or description. Use examples.
EXPLAIN HOW	Describe how something happens, or how to do something. Use examples.
LIST	Give a list of items, explain each briefly.
RELATE	Show how ideas are connected.
STATE	Give main ideas briefly.
SUMMARIZE	State all ideas briefly. Leave out details.
TRACE	Follow something from beginning to end, telling the main points.

How do I tell if I did a good job on my answer?

Ask yourself questions to see how well you have answered the question. Use this checklist when you write practice essays. You should be able to answer **yes** to the questions below. If you can't, make the changes you need.

- ☐ **Did you answer the question?** Make sure you answered the question you were asked.
- ☐ **Does every sentence in the essay add to the answer?** Do they all relate to the question you were asked?
- ☐ **Are your sentences written clearly and neatly?** Make sure that there are no grammar or spelling errors.
- ☐ **Did you support ideas** with facts, details, examples?
- ☐ **Is the essay organized?** Is there an introduction and a conclusion? Does the body grow from the introduction? Do details or examples lead to the conclusion?
- ☐ **Does your essay show that you understand the material?** Do you use examples from both the classroom and the book? From your own experience?

Test Anxiety

I get nervous at the thought of a test. What can I do? Taking a test makes some students tense and anxious. Some students score lower on a test because of this. Some become physically upset—sweating or having difficulty breathing. Others react emotionally. They feel stupid or like failures compared to their classmates. A little bit of anxiety is useful. It helps you focus your attention and do well.

If you have test anxiety, don't waste your time worrying about it. This is self-defeating. It won't help you do better on tests. Instead, keep your anxiety at a level that will help you, not hurt you, on the test.

Here are some suggestions for how to control your anxiety.

1. **Allow yourself plenty of time** to get to the test, find a seat, and get settled. Don't be in a rush. This may make you anxious during the test.
2. **Relax before the test.** Study ahead of time. If you try to 'cram' at the last minute, you will end up more tense.
3. **Don't talk to others before the test.** Anxiety is easy to spread. If you are not anxious already, you might become so.
4. **Have a plan for the test.** Plan your test-taking ahead of time. The suggestions given here can help you plan for the types of questions you will have on the test. You will feel confident about the test if you have a plan.
5. **Relax during the test.** Some tension is normal, so accept it. Take several slow, deep breaths. Exhale as you let your shoulders drop slowly. Here's an exercise that may help you relax during the test. Turn your head slowly in a circle — right ear to right shoulder, head back, left ear to left shoulder, head forward. Try it.

Some students use test anxiety as an excuse to not prepare. They feel that because they will worry during tests anyway, why study? If you prepare well, you should be able to pay attention to the test, and do well.

Is test anxiety a problem that you can't seem to overcome? Talk to someone about it. Speak to your teacher or guidance counselor. They may be able to help you or refer you to someone else who can.



HOW TO DO WELL ON OBJECTIVE TESTS

Why is a test-taking plan important? You are likely to do well on a test if you plan and prepare for it. This isn't just because you know the material. You will also feel confident. You will be able to put your time and energy into answering the questions. You won't spend your time worrying while you take the test.

What kind of test are you going to take? Different kinds of tests have different kinds of questions. Prepare yourself for the kinds of questions you will get. If you are well prepared, you are likely to succeed.

What are objective tests?

- Objective test questions ask you to recognize information.
- These questions include multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching, short answer, and true-false.
- These kinds of questions are designed to make you read and think during the test.
- In an objective test, the teacher is looking for your knowledge of details and ability to reason.

How do I study for an objective test?

Take good notes. You can prepare better for an objective test if you listen well in the lectures, read your textbooks carefully, and make good, readable notes. One way to take notes and review is called the Cornell Note-Taking System. Do you want to know more about this system? See the box on the bottom of this page.

Start by thinking about the kinds of questions you will be asked. You may be asked to recognize definitions, ideas, dates, names, and terms.

Think of possible questions. Were you given a study guide for the class? If so, review your study guide.

Review your class notes. Look for common themes and main ideas. How did the teacher organize the material in the lectures? From most important to least important? By events through time? What points were stressed? **Review your textbook notes.** What are the main ideas? Are there questions at the end of the section or the chapter? Are there new vocabulary words? These are all possible test questions.

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How do I get started on an objective test?

1. Read the directions carefully and completely.
2. Budget your time.
 - Give the most time to the questions that are worth the most points.
 - Answer the 'easy' questions first. This way, you make sure you give the answers you know before you run out of time. This will also help you feel confident about the test.
3. If you are not sure of the answer to a question, skip it. Go back to it after you finish the 'easy' ones.

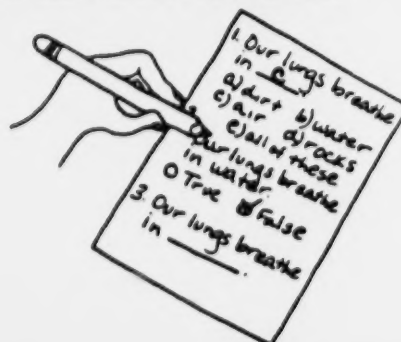
How do I answer objective test questions?

Given below are the different types of questions that you usually find on objective tests. In each section we have listed ways to help you choose the correct answer for each type of question.

Multiple Choice Questions

Example: Our lungs breathe in _____.
a) dirt b) water c) air d) rocks e) all of these

1. Read the directions carefully. The instructions will tell you whether to mark the right answer, the best answer, or all the correct answers.
2. Read each question carefully. Try to figure out the right answer before you read the choices given.
3. Watch for clues in the choices which may help you eliminate incorrect answers. Clues can be:
 - **Absolutes.** An absolute is a word such as *always*, *never*, *every*, or *none*. Choices which contain these words may be incorrect.
 - **Grammar clues.** Singular subjects require singular verbs, plural subjects require plural verbs.
 - The choice '**ALL OF THE ABOVE**' is often correct, especially if at least two of the choices are correct. Be careful though if all of the questions give this choice!
 - **Similarities.** Look carefully at choices that are very similar. Often, one of them is correct.



True-False Questions

Example: Our lungs breathe in water.

True ☐ False ☐

1. Check each part of the sentence. If any part of the sentence is false, the entire statement is false.
2. Statements that contain a qualifier may be true. A qualifier is a word such as *some, most, many, usually*.
3. Statements that contain absolutes are often false. Absolutes are words such as *all, none, always, never, and every*.

Short Answer and Fill in the Blank

You fill in the answer. There are no choices given.

Example: Our lungs breathe in _____.

1. Read the statement carefully. Information in the statement may help trigger your memory.
2. Pay attention to grammar clues.
 - Plural subjects need plural verbs. Singular subjects need singular verbs.
 - The word 'an' shows that the missing word starts with a vowel or the letter 'h'.

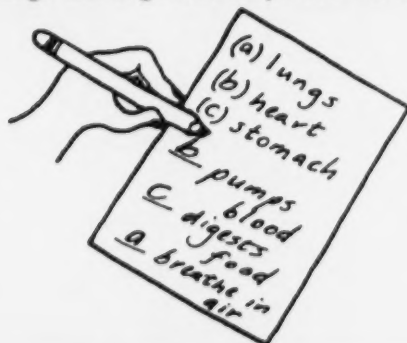
Matching

Example:

The words on the left go with the phrases on the right. On the line in front of each phrase, write the letter of the word that matches that phrase.

(a) lungs	_____ pumps blood
(b) heart	_____ digests food
(c) stomach	_____ breathe in air

1. Read each list all the way through before you begin to match the options.
2. The first time through the list, mark only those answers you are sure you know.
3. Keep working through the list. Eliminate possibilities each time through.
4. Watch for grammar clues. Singular subjects require singular verbs. Plural subjects require plural verbs. In the example, "lungs" is the only plural word. The phrase "breathe in air" is the only plural phrase. The word "lungs" has to go with the phrase "breathe in air."



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HOW TO MANAGE YOUR TIME

Does this sound familiar?

- Your friends are going to a movie. You want to go but you have homework to finish.
- It's the night before a big test. You have just started to study. You have many hours of reading ahead.

Does it seem like you never have enough time? Do you wonder where all your time goes? Do you know someone who usually gets work done before it is due? How do they do it? Maybe they use their time well. You can learn how to spend your time wisely, too. These steps may help you. You may be surprised to find that you have more time than you think! Who needs time management? **EVERYONE!**

How are you really spending your time?

For one week **write down** how you spend ALL your time — sleeping, eating, doing homework, watching television, talking to friends. Be honest. Don't change any of your normal habits during this week. No one will see this diary except you. At the end of the week, ask yourself questions about how you use your time.

- Are you happy with how you spend your time?
- How much time do you spend on unimportant things, such as watching TV or going to the mall?
- Is there wasted time? How much time during the week did you spend on needless errands or daydreaming? If you spent two hours at your desk one night, how much of that time did you really use to study?
- Did you have enough time for homework and after-school activities? Do you need to schedule more time for these?

How can you make the most of your time?

First, use **good study habits**. Here are some ways to help you get more done in your study time.

- 1) Find out what your teacher expects for each assignment. If you aren't sure, ask your teacher.
- 2) Make sure you have what you need **before** you begin to study — paper, pencils, pens, calculator, dictionary, textbooks, etc.
- 3) Study in a comfortable place where you won't be distracted. Use the same place each time you study.
- 4) Study with a pencil or a pen in your hand. Write down important ideas. Taking notes helps you concentrate.
- 5) After you read each section or chapter, answer questions about it. Does the book have questions? Answer them. If the book does not have questions, make up your own and answer them. Recite the main points to yourself **out loud and in your own words**.
- 6) Daydreaming is natural. You can let your mind wander for a **moment**, but then return to your studies. Review where you were before you began to daydream.
- 7) Plan your study time to give you variety. Work on math problems or study physics between reading long chapters in your textbook.
- 8) When you take a break from studying, do something very different. Take a walk, talk with a friend, play some music, run errands. Remember, this is just a break. Don't get so involved in relaxing that you forget to return your studies.

Second, plan ahead. Set goals for yourself. Your plan can help you get everything done on time. It helps to plan by the semester, by the week, and by the day.

1) Plan by the semester.

- **Write down major due dates** on your calendar. Keep your calendar where you will see and use it often.
- **Estimate how long it will take** to do each project. Mark the dates to start each project on your calendar. Allow yourself **more time** than you think you will really need.
- **Set short-term and long-term goals.**
 - Short-term goals may be **Read chapter 7 by Thursday, or Decide on a topic for history paper by the 12th.**
 - Long term goals may be **Have term paper done by April 8th, or Finish reading textbook by May 20th.**

Plan small rewards for yourself when you reach these goals. You might call a friend or go to a movie.

• Make a master schedule.

Your master schedule should include the following activities and any others you may have.

- ALL required school activities
- work schedule
- after-school activities
- blank spaces for unknown activities

A master schedule can help you keep track of all the things that you need to do. If you know **what** you have to do and **when** you need to do it, you can prepare better to meet deadlines.

2) Plan by the week.

- **Plan when to do all your tasks** during the week. Schedule time to study for tests, read your textbooks, write papers, go to work, be at meetings. Leave enough time for your chores and household duties. Don't plan to do so many things that you don't have time to eat and sleep! Remember, if you don't get enough rest, you won't be able to do the things you have planned.

• Look at the WHOLE week.

- **Schedule small blocks of time each day** to study, instead of one large block during the week.
- **Finish at least one task** in each study block.

3) Plan each day.

- **Make a "to do" list** the night before or first thing in the morning. If you write down what you need to do, your mind will be free to study. You won't worry and spend time thinking about what you have to do next.



See how well your new schedule works. Use it for a few weeks, then ask yourself some questions. Are you getting your schoolwork done on time? Are you getting more things done? Do you feel you have control of your time?

YES? Then your new schedule is working well.

NO? Then you should look at your schedule to see how it can be improved. Some of these things may help you.

- Cut out wasted time. Make more time for studying, meetings, work, or whatever needs it. Leave time for fun, too. Don't stop talking with your friends or listening to music. Just make sure you aren't spending all your time on fun and relaxation and leaving yourself short on time for other important things.

- Are you trying to do too much? Be realistic about what you can do before you make a commitment. It is fun and satisfying to be busy, but remember that there is only one of you! It is better to do a few things well than lots of things badly!
- You may need to follow your schedule more closely. Even a well-planned schedule cannot help you if you do not follow it. Or, you may need to work on the schedule until it fits your life. This takes time, but it's worth working toward this goal. If you plan your time wisely, you can get things done on time and have time to relax, too.

It is very important to learn to manage your time wisely. As you get older, you will have more responsibilities. You will find it easier to succeed if you learn to budget your time well.

HOW TO WRITE WELL

Why should I learn to write well?

Writing is important to many areas of your life. At school, you have to write reports, papers, and exams. You probably write letters to friends and relatives. At a job you may have to write memos and letters. You may buy something that does not work, and want to write to the company that made it. Good writing skills can make these things easier. If you have good writing skills, readers are more likely to understand your ideas.

Can I learn to write well?

Good writing can be developed with practice, practice, and more practice. Don't give up if your writing isn't bestseller quality on the first try. You can improve your writing skills by following some simple rules for good writing, and by practicing. The more you write, the better your writing will be.

Use your high school time wisely. Work on your writing skills now, while you have teachers who can help you. Save yourself time and frustration later.

Basic Writing Skills

No matter what you are writing, you have one main concern. You want the reader to understand what you are trying to say. To do this use good grammar, correct punctuation, and neat handwriting. Here are some simple rules that can make your writing clearer and easier to read.

- **Write complete sentences.** Do you know what this means? If you don't, ask your teacher for help. There are also some good books that can help you write correctly. One is Strunk & White's *The Elements of Style*. Or, ask your English teacher to suggest a book.

- **Use correct punctuation.** Punctuation doesn't have to be complicated. Use common sense as a guide for when to punctuate. Sentences end with a period. Questions end with a question mark. Use exclamation points for exclamations and commands. Commas tell the reader when to pause. They separate items in a list, or clauses in a sentence.

Are you having trouble with the punctuation in a sentence? Your sentence structure may be too complex. Start over and make a simpler sentence.

- **Be clear and brief.** Say exactly what you mean. Think about the words you use. Does each word add something to the sentence? Does each sentence add to your message? If not, take out the unneeded words. Stick to the point. Brief, clear writing lets you make your point faster and keep your reader interested. Brief, clear writing is usually interesting to read.

- **Write in a natural style.** Writing, like conversation, should flow naturally. Don't try to impress your reader with long words or complex sentences. Write so that your reader will understand your idea.

- **Develop an ear for good writing style.** Good writing is more than following rules about grammar and punctuation. To be a good writer, you need to be aware of style. You can develop this awareness for good writing style. How? Read a lot. Read about many different subjects. Read different kinds of writing — novels and poetry, as well as non-fiction. Practice writing. The more you read and write, the better you will be at it.

- **Revise and rewrite.** Don't expect your first draft to be perfect. Your writing can always be improved. When you write something, put it aside for at least a day. Later, when you read it again, you are likely to have a fresh point of view. You may see ways to improve it. Try to cut out extra words, make sentences shorter, and make your idea clearer. Have other people read what you have written and make suggestions. Revising should be a regular part of your writing process. Revise. Revise. Revise!

- **Neatness counts.** Sloppy handwriting is hard to read. Your readers won't understand the point you want to make if they can't read the words.



Writing A Paper

There is another way to help the reader understand what you are trying to say. You can organize your ideas well. Here are some suggestions for how to do this.

How do I start?

You can start by **brainstorming**. To brainstorm, simply think about your topic and write down all the ideas that come to your mind. Don't decide whether the ideas are good or bad yet. Just write them all down. Then, go through the list and think about each one. Decide which ones to include and which to leave out. Brainstorming is a good way to begin because it helps you be creative.

How do I organize my ideas?

Before you start to write, organize the ideas that you brainstormed. Which ideas should you keep? Which ideas should you ignore? You can help yourself organize your ideas if you write an **outline**. An outline doesn't have to be formal. It can simply be some notes that tell you which ideas to write about first, second, third. This helps you decide how many paragraphs you will need to get your ideas across and what will go into each paragraph. An outline can help you put your ideas in an order that your reader will understand.

How do I put my organized ideas on paper?

There is a simple formula you can follow which will make your writing more clear. It says that to get an idea across to your audience, you should "Tell them what you're going to tell them. Tell them. And then tell them what you've told them." You can do this in a short essay that is three to five paragraphs long.

How do I organize each paragraph?

When you write a paragraph, the first sentence should tell the reader what the paragraph will be about. Follow with the details you want to include. You may use the last sentence of the paragraph to lead the reader smoothly into the next paragraph.

How should I organize a paper? Use three basic parts. They are the introduction, the body, and the conclusion.

• The Introduction

The first paragraph is called the **introductory paragraph**. This is where you introduce your topic. You use this first paragraph to tell your reader what the essay will be about—to "tell them what you're going to tell them." Here, you should state clearly the points you are going to make in the essay. This is called the **statement of purpose**. It tells the reader why you are writing the paper.

• The Body

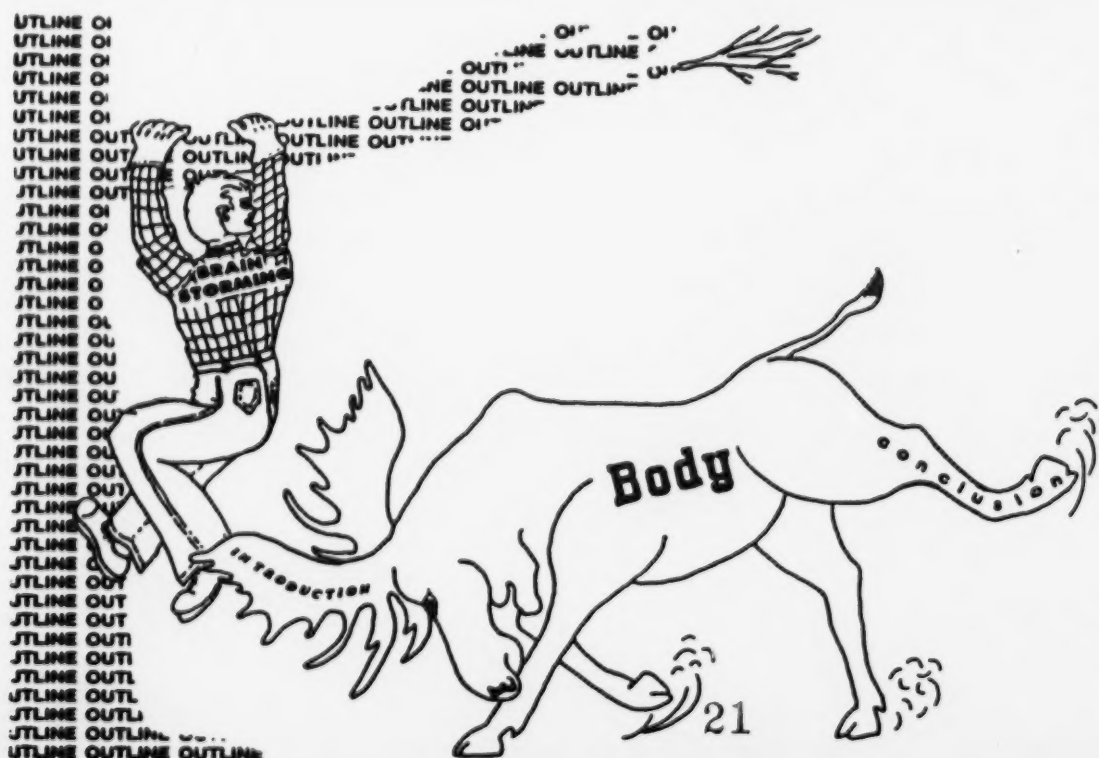
The next paragraph or paragraphs give the reader the information about your topic. This is called the **body** of your essay. It is where you "Tell them." If you are giving the reader your opinion, you will use these paragraphs to give examples that support your argument. If you are describing something, here you will put in the details. If you are explaining a process, this is where you will give the steps to follow.

Whether you need one paragraph, or three, or ten, depends on the topic you have chosen. It also depends on the amount of detail you want to give the reader. If your process has three steps, you may decide to use three paragraphs, one for each step. If you are describing a time period, such as a century, you may cover the century in one paragraph. Or, you might cover the first half of the century in one paragraph and the second half in another paragraph. Think about how to divide your topic before you begin to write.

• The Conclusion

The final paragraph is your **conclusion**. Here you will sum up your idea. In a few short sentences you will "tell them what you told them" in the body of your essay. Make sure that your introduction and conclusion agree. That is, make sure you have done what you said you would do in your statement of purpose. This is also the place to add any insights or final thoughts you have on the topic.

Good writing skills will help you throughout your life. It is worth spending time to develop these skills.



USING THE LIBRARY

Why is it important to know how to use a library?

Sometimes you need to find an answer to a question. A library is one of the best places to look. A library is a rich storehouse of information. To find what you are looking for, it helps to understand how a library is organized.

How is a library organized?

A library has four main parts.

- card catalogue
- books
- reference section
- periodicals

What is the card catalogue?

The card catalogue lists the items (books, journals, videotapes, etc.) in the library. Each item in the library is listed in the card catalogue three ways: by title, by author, and by subject. Some libraries have one card catalogue section for the author and title cards, and a separate section for the subject cards. In some libraries you will find the card catalogue on computer terminals. A librarian can show you how to use this kind of catalogue.

How do I use the card catalogue?

Let's say you have a paper due in your Civics class. Your teacher has asked you to write about a famous American leader. You have decided to write your paper about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The card catalogue is a good place to start looking for information.

You could begin with the **subject** listings. First, you would look under *King, Martin Luther, Jr.* This is because people are usually listed by last name. Titles such as *Dr.* are usually not included on catalogue cards. Each card with the heading *King, Martin Luther, Jr.* will give you a book on your subject. Next, you might look under *Civil Rights*. You might find a card that says 'See also.' The subjects listed on these cards can lead you to more helpful information about Dr. King.

If your library has a separate section of the card catalogue for **author** and **title** cards, be sure to check this section under *King, Martin Luther, Jr.* This will give you a listing of all the books in the library that were written by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. They will be listed alphabetically by title after the author's name.

Each of these books will also be listed by **title** on title cards. Books are listed alphabetically by the first word of the title in the card catalogue. If a title begins with an article (a word such as *a*, *an*, or *the*), skip that word and begin with the next word of the title.

The catalogue card also tells you what the book is about—the **description**. It tells you who published the book—the **publisher**. It tells you where the book was published—the **place of publication**. It tells you when it was published—the **date of publication**. It also tells you what the call number is.

A subject card about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. might look like this:

call number	title	subject
JC 599 .U5 B95	THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 <i>The civil rights act of 1964: (text, analysis, history; what it means to employers, business, unions, workers, minority groups.)</i>	Bureau of National Affairs, Washington D.C. [1964]
	vii, 424 p. forms. 24cm. (A BNA operations manual)	

piece of publication, publisher, date of publication

description of book

What is a call number?

The call number tells where a book, journal, or videotape is on the shelves. There are two main ways that libraries organize their books. They use either the **Dewey Decimal Classification System** or the **Library of Congress Classification System**. Both systems group books by subject—what the book is about. On the back of this page is a list of subjects used by each system. Most public libraries use the Dewey Decimal System. Universities and some large libraries use the Library of Congress System.

The call number is composed of two parts:

- JC 599 — The number on the first line tells you what the subject is.
.U5 B95 — The number on the second line identifies a particular book.

Books about the same subject have the same number on the first line of the call number. Within the subject, books are in alphabetical order by the author's last name. Each book about the same subject will have a different number on the second line of the call number.

How do I find a book on the library shelves?

- Browse by subject number, or
- Find the call number in the card catalogue.
 1. Copy the complete call number.
 2. Find out where the books are shelved that have the first line of your call number. Check shelf numbers.
 3. There may be many books that have the same first line of the call number as your book. These books are on the shelf in alphabetical order by the second line of their call numbers.
- If you need help ask a librarian.

How are the library shelves organized?

Libraries have fiction and non-fiction books. In most libraries, they are shelved separately.

- **Fiction books** are about imaginary characters and events. Fiction books are shelved alphabetically, by the author's last name. Novels, short stories, poems, and plays are examples of fiction.
- **Non-fiction books** are about real things. Travel guides, autobiographies, and science, history, and *How To* books are examples of non-fiction. You will find books by and about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in non-fiction. Some other examples are books about such topics as acid rain, earthquakes, and World War II.

Where else can I look for information?

The reference section is another important part of the library. It contains non-fiction books that can help you find out about a topic. The reference section includes books such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, *Who's Who*, atlases and maps. Reference books usually can't be checked out of the library. That way they are always there for people to use. The reference section often has tables or desks where you may sit to use the reference books. You may take notes there. Sometimes you can photocopy the pages you need to use at home.

SUBJECTS IN THE DEWEY DECIMAL SYSTEM

- 100 — Philosophy and Related Areas
- 200 — Religion
- 300 — Social Sciences
- 400 — Language
- 500 — Pure Sciences
- 600 — Technology (Applied Sciences)
- 700 — The Arts
- 800 — Literature and Rhetoric
- 900 — General Geography and History

SUBJECTS IN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS SYSTEM

- A — General Works
- B — Philosophy & Religion
- C — History (General)
- D — History (Old World)
- E — American History & General U.S. History
- F — American History (Local) & Latin American
- G — Geography, Anthropology, Folklore, Sport, etc.
- H — Social Sciences
- J — Political Science
- K — Law
- L — Education
- M — Music
- N — Fine Arts
- P — Language and Literature
- Q — Science
- R — Medicine
- S — Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Culture, Fish Culture, Hunting
- T — Technology
- U — Military Science
- V — Naval Science
- Z — Bibliography and Library Science

Periodicals are also found in the library. Periodicals include magazines and newspapers that come out *periodically*—on a set schedule. Newspapers may come out every day or once a week. Magazines may come out weekly, monthly, or several times per year. Periodicals may have their own section in the library. Or, they may be shelved along with the books by their topic.

The Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature is a good place to begin looking for periodicals. *The Readers' Guide* is usually shelved in the reference section of the library. It is a guide to a large number of U.S. periodicals. It is arranged by author and subject. *The Readers' Guide* includes listings of fiction, poems, records, and reviews of dance, music, movies, television, radio, theatre programs, and more. *The Readers' Guide* is not the only periodical index. There are others. If you learn how to use *The Readers' Guide*, you should be able to use the others without much trouble.

Let's go back to your Civics paper. If you want to use a periodical to get more information about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., look under *King, Martin Luther* in *The Readers' Guide*. You might find a list like the one below. The list tells you where to find articles about your topic.

subject heading	article title	author
KING, MARTIN LUTHER	1929-1968	
	about	
1968: a hot spring in Memphis, B. Summer.		
Publishers Weekly	237:60	Mr 23 '90
Confessions of a racist. P. Yancey.	11	per
Christianity Today	34:22-6	Ja 15 '90
The day of 'an as an'. D. Boer.	11	per
US News & World Report	108:10-11	Ja 22 '90

information for finding a periodical —
volume number: pages, date of publication

What else can I find in a library?

Besides these materials to help you with your questions, the library has lots of other resources. You might find:

- albums, tapes, and other recordings. You can find all kinds of music, such as music from other parts of the world. You may also find poems, plays, stories to be read aloud, books for the blind, books on tape.
- films, videotapes, and film strips. You may check these out from many libraries. You might find classic movies, *How To* videos, and much more.
- news and information. You can catch up on world or local news, the latest in sports, travel, poetry, novels, or science fiction.
- pieces of art to check out for display in your home.

What else do I need to know?

Libraries also have another valuable resource—

LIBRARIANS. Librarians are there to help you find the information you need. If you are confused or cannot find something, ask one for help.

END

U.S. Dept. of Education

Office of Education
Research and
Improvement (OERI)

ERIC

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